commercial origin are their main instruments of fishing. To this they added dynamite, sometimes with disastrous results to themselves, mostly as a way of securing bait. Single-pointed fish-spears which loomed so importantly in McGee's account have gone the way of the Dodo for its original purpose and transformed into iron bar lances, now used largely as weapons against rattlesnakes that men encounter in their desert roamings. However, in the forties, when the Seris spent a great deal of time getting sharks and huge rays, they killed them with these weapons.

What retain some importance are the harpoon and the two-pronged spear called "puiero." The two-pronged spear is one of their oldest weapons. The construction is much the same as when McGee visited them. The spear is used mainly to stab large-size fish, the giant *bais* or *mero* for example, after it has been brought up on the line. The harpoon is now exclusively a weapon for the turtle hunt.

An interesting fate met an effort to teach these Indians net fishing in 1947. They tried, ruined the nets and never took it up since. The instigators were Mexicans, the fish traders. I suspect that Seri individualism had a great deal to do with their lack of interest in net fishing which after all demands a certain amount of cooperation. With the hook and line fishing, men can have much more their own way.

An added "tool" of the Seris is the plank boat. The balsa which McGee still observed during his visit, had already vanished by the time Kroeber came to the Seriland and had been replaced by these boats. The boats are flat bottomed but good sized. The material was provided by the Mexican government. Boats are usually propelled by 5 hp. motors leased from the Mexicans (no Seri is rich enough to purchase one) who also sell them gasoline and oil at exorbitant prices and in return buy Seris' catch of fish and sea turtle for low prices. At the time of my visits these amounted roughly to less than a peso per kilo of the flayed, degutted and cleaned fish (less than 8 cents) with fluctuation up and down the scale depending on the kind of the fish, and to about 30-50 pesos for medium to large size "cahuama," the live marine turtle.

The Seri boats are also propelled by paddles and sail—this is always the case with the families who wish to stay away on Tiburon for some time. The Mexicans will not lease them their motors for such trips even if the Seri, some of them at least, have enough knowledge of the motors to repair minor stoppages—a demonstration of the fallacy of McGee's idea that they are genetically unable to handle tools. In this respect, Kroeber's (1930: 25) estimate of them is closer to the truth.

Sexual division of labor in procuring food goes on, much the same as it had 70 and 30 years ago, with the sole exception of the imported goods. Here purchases are made either by men or women or by children, depending on who at the time has the cash and what one wishes to buy.

Fishing is still done by men and so is hunting. Women still concentrate on gathering, whether of

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quite possible but I couldn't substantiate the story from contemporary evidence. Perhaps during the height of the shark hunting for the liver oil, the Seris used the oil also for wood polish, although it isn't very clear just what sort of artifact they make would require such treatment. The wooden tools or artifacts among them are in short supply at all times. Finally, the huge horned manta was supposedly hunted also for its hide but just in what circumstances it was not explained. It is the only fish which the Seri ever mentioned as having been put to such use.

Fishing

As already mentioned, fishing nowadays is largely accompanied from flat-bottomed boats with hook and line. The old ways of getting fish by spearing are almost gone for good. Recently, an attempt has been made to teach the Seris siene fishing, but 10 years of these endeavors accomplished only ruination of a number of expensive nets and of much fishing gear and the desertion of the project by the Indians. It may be that their individualistic and almost anarchistic attitudes preclude cooperation, essential in this type of fishing.

The bait is obtained in any one of the three ways: by dynamiting fish in tide pools or along the shore, or by catching small fry with small hook and line, or finally by collecting small fishlets in the tide pools, prying them out from under rocks or simply—and here the Seri boys excel—by shooting them in the tide pools with tiny toy arrows or simply spearing them with a stick. The dynamiting is done with the purchased sticks of dynamite which the Seris obtain in the tiendas. The procedure is often risky and down right dangerous. Some of the Seris have blown themselves up with dynamite. I have seen one of them, who lost both arms and had a jaw broken during a dynamiting trial. He went about with a dirty rag tied up over his head to support the wrecked jaw-bone. He was carried off by measles two years later in the 1955 epidemic.

The Seris' commercial fishing is pretty much controlled and exploited by the two or three Mexican fish traders from Nogales and Hermosillo. These have their tiendas in Desemboque, which at set price sell things to the villagers. They also provide the Indians with the five horse-power motors for fishing trips and pleasure cruises and with the oil and gasoline essential to run these—also at set price. They finally purchase the fish—at a set price—and from the proceeds the Seris purchase goods at the tiendas, completing the cycle. Not all Seris are compelled to work for the Mexicans, and, in fact, they do not always do so. Some families stay away from Desemboque and depend on the sail and oars for propulsion. They come to the village only once every few months to obtain supplies. Even when in the village, the Seris make little effort to fish for more than they wish to get in order to satisfy their immediate needs.

Fishing expeditions usually take place in the morning. Most Seris will set off before daybreak and will return with the catch by 11 a.m. or noon.

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XI

SUMMARY

224 Hunting is very decidedly secondary to fishing, although it is still much practiced by certain individuals and in a desultory way probably by all.

462 There is a clean cut division of labor in all these occupations. Fishing and hunting are men's occupations, gathering of the desert animals and beachcombing for the intertidal animals is largely the job of women and children. Boys get broken [868] into men's occupations in adolescence, girls into women's jobs very much earlier.

224 Avoidance of fishing or hunting certain creatures appears much more a matter of custom than of well defined and socially rationalized attitude. Frequently an animal is not hunted simply because the Seri feel it is too big and too strong for them to tackle.

• 157 Through all these activities, Seri individualism is curiously woven and accounts for the failure of anything that might resemble a collective effort.

Food Preferences and Preparation

252 Seri food is prepared in a simplest sort of way. [263] Boiling in water is usual with salt and sometimes a few other spices added. While most food is prepared that way, snakes and fishes are usually fried, without any ingredients. There has been a [178] notable shift toward greater fanciness in the ingredients, as they have become more readily available.

262 There are many preferences. Animals are scaled in desirability. Some fishes, marine turtles, chuckawalla, deer and peccary and duck are at the top of the list; lower animals, smaller fishes including puerco in the middle, while the sea gull and the pelican are probably at the very bottom of the pit. This again reflects temporal changes in tastes [178] although not necessarily a direct influence from the Mexicans.

Pets

231 Few pets are kept, other than dogs. Such animals as come are those captured accidentally. In most cases they are bird nestlings.

Taxonomy

* 825 Differential criteria are applied in the classification of different groups. There is less tendency to group birds than to group different mammals and classificatory ideas break down almost completely in smaller animals, especially insects and molluscs. Considering the economic importance of the molluscs, poor ability to distinguish the Gastropods from the Pelecypods is striking.

The classificatory criteria differ for different groups. Mammals are generally recognized by the furiness, birds by the ability to fly and the pres-

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157 The women are virtuous and faithful and perform all the duties of 152 wife and mother and bear their share of hardships. The hard life, [145] exposure and struggle for existence soon causes hard features, wrinkles [165] and ugliness. Many babies die young and the tribe probably numbers [167] only about two hundred.

123 The dancing by the driftwood fires continued as we turned in to rest, our eyes constantly drawn to the flame and the glittering eyes in the wild dark faces, while the waves of the sea accompanied the chanting in that mysterious isle of Seriland.

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133

Seris - off to the fishing grounds - December 1934.
Alcatraz Island in distance.

222 In Seriland most of the food comes from the sea. During April and May, at the time of my first visit, a green grass growing on the sea bottom was detached and washed ashore. The women dragged it up on the bank near camp and spread it out to dry. Some of the stalks contained about seven fine green seeds the size of a pin head. When dry, the women threshed them out with sticks on a piece of canvas. These are [285] cleaned by the deft use of the *batea*, or winnowing basket, of which these people are pastmasters.

252 A pint of these fine seeds were parched in an olla over coals of driftwood and constantly stirred to prevent burning. It was then ground 262 on a flat rock like a *metate*---any flat rock---into a green meal which was very nourishing. This was cooked in an olla with turtle oil, making a porridge like thick green paint. It was then drunk or eaten with the fingers. If there is plenty, two fingers are used; if not, only one finger.

BAND V

642 These people were apparently hunters, gatherers, and fishermen. It is said that they speared fish from the shore since they did not use *balsas*. They too apparently raided the ranches. Their warring nature has already been discussed; it resulted in the acquisition of few friends. However, several marriages between members of this band and members of subdivision 2 of Band III are said to have occurred.

BAND VI

The members of Band VI lived on San Esteban Island and were the most primitive of the tribe. They lived in huts made of driftwood and in caves and made extensive use of the *balsa*. Although they did not have the bow and arrow, they did become expert in the use of the spear. The people depended mainly on a seafood, iguana, and maguey diet.

621 Perhaps it was due to the confined living space on the small island with the accompanying lack of fresh water that relations between the four subdivisions were precarious and fights broke out frequently. The Seri today stress the fact that the members of this band were impetuous and unpredictable.

642 Their relations with the other bands were generally good however. Seri from Band III were free to visit San Esteban where they were well treated.

The San Esteban people seldom traveled to the mainland, and, since they spoke no Spanish, it is probable that they made no peaceful contact with non-Seri groups.

642 COLLAPSE OF THE BAND SYSTEM

Internal strife in the Seri tribe was probably a major factor in the establishment of the band system. External strife was a major factor in its downfall.

Reference has been made to the plundering, killings and rustling of cattle to which certain of the bands were dedicated. The concern of the Sonora government was aroused, and steps were taken to crush the rebellious groups. According to the present-day Seri, military action by army units and rancher outfits against the various bands resulted in the near-destruction of the whole tribe.[11]